COMMUNICATIONS

15. My Government are equally active in the development of communications. They have approved a programme for the special surfacing of roads according to which they have sanctioned the conversion of about 19 miles of the Main Central Road between Mulakuzha and Ettumanur to dust-proof road. Similar dust-proof surfacing of congested areas on Main Trunk Roads from Vadakkancherri to Trivandrum has also been programmed. A Special Officer has been appointed to take a census of the existing village and ryots' roads and other minor roads opened by ryots but not yet taken over by them. Three important major bridges at Chavara, Kollakadavu and Mallapally are in progress, and work is about to commence on a major bridge across the Meenachil river at Palai while plans for a bridge across the right arm of Periyar have been forwarded to the Government of India for a grant under the National Highways Scheme. The Government of India have taken over the responsibility of maintaining the West Coast Road from Cape Comorin to Kalissery frontier *via* Trivandrum, Cochin and Trichur and the roads from Trichur and Nagercoil to frontier, amounting to 282 miles in all.

The Government of India have sanctioned the engineering and traffic survey of the proposed Quilon-Ernakulam Railway. The Chief Engineer and the Cheif Traffic Manager of the South Indian Railway have completed a reconnaisance of the area, and the survey work has started.

WATER SUPPLY

16. The scheme for providing water supply to coastal regions is in progress. One more tube-well has been completed and another is in progress. Equipments for carrying out this work on a larger scale have been already ordered. Work for extending water supply in the Vypeen area has been sanctioned and pipe laying commenced, while schemes for water supply to the village of Muttam and villages between Nagercoil and Mukkada have also been started.

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

17. The Panchayat Department continues to bestow its attention on the various ameliorative measures for the betterment of village life, such as improvements to roads, construction of village halls, sinking of wells, construction of latrines, opening of child welfare centres and libraries and provision of irrigation facilities. Delimitation Committees have been constituted for fixing the boundaries of the Panchayats to be constituted under the new Act and the new Panchayats are expected to come into being soon.

FINANCE

18. It is a matter for gratification that my Government have almost liquidated the debt due to the Government of India on account of food supplies partly by adjusting the amount due to us on account of the Central Share of the current liabilities and public debt and partly by cash payment in instalments. Pending finalisation of the figures, the Government of India are now paying a sum of Rs. 70·00 lakhs every quarter towards the net loss sustained by us as a result of the integration of the federal finances of the State with those of the rest of India. It is yet difficult to forecast how the financial position will turn out to be in the coming years, but there is little doubt that we should carefully husband our resources and exercise utmost economy in expenditure.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

19. The brief survey I have made will show that my Government are making steady progress in several directions, particularly in the expansion of nation-building services. The New Constitution has set high ideals before us, and we

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